

their adversaries, then I will appeal to the people ; then I will take my stand upon the great plain of popular opinion, and shoulder to shoulder with my friends and my neighbors, fight the last great battle for the Union, the Constitution and the preservation of our freedom. The gentlemen from New Hanover says the cost of a Convention will be inconsiderable. There was a different tune sung to me last summer, by those who were opposed to calling a Convention to amend our Constitution ; but if I thought the proposed Convention would tend to restore harmony to the country, I would not count dollars. Believing it would have no such effect, I am unwilling to impose a useless expense upon the people. But, Mr. Chairman, I am much more opposed to the substitute offered by the gentleman from New Hanover, than I am to the original bill. I am opposed to it from the very consideration which it might be supposed would have recommended it to me—that is, that it is an open, unrestricted Convention, in which everything may be considered. If a Convention is to be called to decide whether or not we shall go out of the Union, I want that to be the only issue presented. I do not wish the people's attention to be drawn from the main question by side issues. I do not wish delegates elected to that Convention upon any other than the real issue. I do not wish some returned in favor of ad valorem, some against it; some for a change in the basis of representation, (which I tell gentlemen is irresistible in some counties in the west,) and others opposed to it; others upon an amendment as to the *status* of free negroes, and all having the opportunity to misrepresent the people upon the great issue of Union or disunion. There is danger that the people may be mystified and deceived by such a multiplicity of issues. If we are to take the first step in revolution, if we are to call the proposed Convention, I wish the great issue submitted by itself to the people, and then every man's position upon that issue will be understood by them. I am very much in favor of Ad Valorem taxation. I made it a point in my canvass last summer, but rather than peril the existence of this Union, I am willing to give up Ad Valorem. The preservation of peace and the perpetuity of the Union ought now to be the first and highest aspiration of every patriotic citizen. But I have another objection, much more powerful with me, against the substitute offered by the gentleman from